

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to obtain a program object for use in a host application running on a client computer, the client computer coupled to a server computer via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) enabling the user to select a program object;
- (b) customizing the program object according to user input;
- (c) at the server computer, automatically customizing the program object according to a rule-set in a program object template corresponding to the selected program object to create a limited functionality object;
- (d) downloading the limited functionality object from the server computer to the client computer;
- (e) allowing the host application to utilize the limited functionality object;
- (f) upon user request at the client computer, sending a request to the server computer to obtain full functionality object corresponding to the limited functionality object;
- (g) at the client computer, determining a set of program parts required to create the full functionality object from the limited functionality object;
- (h) downloading the set of program parts from the server computer to the client computer;
- (i) at the client computer, combining the set of program parts and the limited functionality object to create the full functionality object; and
- (j) allowing the host application to utilize the full functionality object.

2. A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to obtain a program object for use in a host application running on a client computer without halting or restarting the host

application, the client computer coupled to a server computer via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) enabling the user to select a program object;

(b) at the server computer, customizing the program object according to a rule-set in a program object template corresponding to the selected program object to create a unique object;

(c) downloading the unique object from the server computer to the client computer; and

(d) integrating the unique object in the host application without halting or restarting the host application.

3. A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to obtain a program object for use in a host application running on a client computer, the client computer coupled to a server computer via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) enabling selection of a program object;

(b) at the server computer, customizing the program object;

(c) downloading the limited functionality object from the server computer to the client computer;

(d) integrating the limited functionality object in the host application;

(e) under control of the host application, outputting the limited functionality object to the user wherein the user cannot control the limited functionality object;

(f) upon user request at the client computer, sending a request to the server computer to obtain full functionality object corresponding to the limited functionality object;

(g) determining a set of program parts required to create the full functionality object from the limited functionality object;

(h) downloading the set of program parts from the server computer to the client computer;

(i) at the client computer, combining the set of program

9. A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to obtain a program object for use in a host application running on a client computer, the client computer coupled to a server computer via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) enabling the user to select a program object;
- (b) at the server computer, customizing the program object according to a rule-set to create a unique object;
- (c) downloading the unique object from the server computer to the client computer; and
- (d) integrating the unique object in the host application.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein the step of integrating the full functionality object in the host application comprises integrating the full functionality object in the host application without halting or restarting the host application.

11. The method of claim 9 further comprising the step of storing the identity of the user in a sales database at the server computer, the identity of the user being associated with the unique object in the sales database.

12. The method of claim 11 further comprising the steps of:

- (a) accessing the sales database to determine the identity of the user associated with the unique object;
- (b) enabling the user to electronically transfer the unique object to a second user at a second client computer; and
- (c) amending the sales database to store the identity of the second user as being associated with the unique object.

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1 13. A computer implemented method for enabling a user to
2 obtain a program object for use in a host application running
3 on a client computer, the client computer coupled to a server
4 computer via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) at the server computer, customizing the program object
6 according to a rule-set to create a limited
7 functionality object;

8 (b) downloading the limited functionality object from the
9 server computer to the client computer;

10 (c) integrating the limited functionality object in the
11 host application;

12 (d) under control of the host application, outputting the
13 limited functionality object to the user wherein the
14 user cannot control the limited functionality object;

15 (e) upon user request at the client computer, sending a
16 request to the server computer to obtain full
17 functionality object corresponding to the limited
18 functionality object;

19 (f) downloading computer code from the server computer to
20 the client computer;

21 (g) at the client computer, combining said computer code
22 and the limited functionality object to create the
23 full functionality object; and

24 (h) integrating the full functionality object in the host
25 application such that the user can control the full
26 functionality object when using the host application.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of integrating
2 the full functionality object in the host application
3 comprises integrating the full functionality object in the
4 host application without halting or restarting the host
5 application.

1 15. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of integrating
2 the limited functionality object in the host application

3 comprises integrating the limited functionality object in the
4 host application without halting or restarting the host
5 application.

1 16. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of customizing
2 the program object according to a rule-set to create a limited
3 functionality object further comprises customizing the program
4 object according to a rule-set to create a unique limited
5 functionality object.

1 17. A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to
2 obtain a program object for use in a host application running
3 on a client computer, the client computer coupled to a server
4 computer via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) creating a limited functionality object at the server
6 computer;

7 (b) downloading the limited functionality object from the
8 server computer to the client computer;

9 (c) receiving a request at the server computer from the
10 client computer to obtain a full functionality object
11 corresponding to the limited functionality object;

12 (d) providing a set of program parts from the server
13 computer to the client computer, the set of program
14 parts when combined with the limited functionality
15 object creating the full functionality object; and

16 (e) recording in a database at the server computer the
17 identity of the user associated with the request.

1 18. A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to
2 obtain a program object for use in a host application running
3 on a client computer, the client computer coupled to a server
4 computer via a network, the method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) downloading a limited functionality object from the
6 server computer to the client computer;

7 (b) receiving a request at the server computer from the

8 client computer to obtain a full functionality object
9 corresponding to the limited functionality object;
10 (c) providing a set of program parts from the server
11 computer to the client computer, the set of program
12 parts when combined with the limited functionality
13 object creating a unique full functionality object.

1 19. The method of claim 18 further comprising the step of
2 recording in a database at the server computer the identity of
3 the user associated with the request.

4 20. A computer-implemented method for enabling a user to
5 obtain a program object for use in a host application running
6 on a client computer, the client computer coupled to a server
7 computer via a network, the method comprising the steps of:
8 (a) enabling the host application to display a limited
9 functionality object at the client computer;
10 (b) enabling the user the ability to select the limited
11 functionality object;
12 (c) upon said selection, sending to the server computer a
13 request for a full functionality object corresponding
14 to the limited functionality object;
15 (d) receiving the full functionality object at the client
16 computer from the server computer;
17 (e) integrating the full functionality object in the host
18 application without halting or restarting the host
application; and
(f) allowing the user to manipulate the full functionality
object.

1 21. The method of claim 20 wherein the step of receiving the
2 full functionality object further comprises receiving a unique
3 full functionality object at the client computer.

1 22. The method of claim 20 further comprising the step of

2 enabling the user to provide identifying data and payment data
3 to the server computer.

1 23. The method of claim 20 further comprising the step of
2 transmitting the full functionality object to a second client
3 computer.

1 24. An e-commerce system distributing program objects for use
2 in a host application, the system operating over a network,
3 comprising:

- 4 (a) a client computer running the host application;
5 (b) a server computer coupled to the client computer via
6 the network;
7 (c) a program object template stored at the server
8 computer;
9 (d) means, located at the server computer, for customizing
10 the program object template according to a rule-set to
11 create a limited functionality object;
12 (e) means for downloading the limited functionality object
13 from the server computer to the client computer;
14 (f) means, located at the client computer, for integrating
15 the limited functionality object in the host
16 application;
17 (g) means, operating under control of the host
18 application, for outputting the limited functionality
19 object to the user wherein the user cannot control the
20 limited functionality object;
21 (h) means, located at the client computer, for sending a
22 request to the server computer to obtain full
23 functionality object corresponding to the limited
24 functionality object;
25 (i) means to create the full functionality object; and
26 (j) means, located at the client computer, for integrating
27 the full functionality object in the host application
28 such that the user can control the full functionality

1 25. In a network comprising a client computer running a host
2 application and coupled to a server computer, a system to
3 distribute program objects via the network, comprising:

4 one or more program object templates stored at the server
5 computer in a database, each program object template providing
6 a definition for a program object and a rule-set to create the
7 program object;

8 a server computer program running on the server computer,
9 the server computer program accessing the program object
10 templates and creating unique program objects and transmitting
11 said unique program objects to the client computer;

12 a sales database at the server computer for storing
13 details regarding each person who obtains a unique program
14 object; and

15 a client computer program running on the client computer
16 in conjunction with the host application, the client computer
17 program providing the unique program object to the host
18 application.

19 26. In a network comprising a client computer running a host
20 application and coupled to a server computer, a system to
21 distribute program objects via the network, comprising:

22 one or more program object templates stored at the server
23 computer in a database, each program object template providing
24 a definition for a program object and a rule-set to create the
25 program object;

26 a server computer program running on the server computer,
27 the server computer program accessing the program object
28 templates and creating limited functionality program objects
29 and full functionality program objects, and transmitting said
30 program objects to the client computer;

31 a sales database at the server computer for storing
32 details regarding each person who obtains a full functionality

15 program object, and

16 a client computer program running on the client computer
17 in conjunction with the host application, the client computer
18 program enabling the host application to request program
19 objects from the server computer program and integrate program
20 objects,

21 wherein a limited functionality object, when executed by
22 the host application, is displayed but cannot be controlled by
23 a user; and

24 wherein a full functionality object, when executed by the
25 host application, is displayed and can be controlled by the
26 user.

Introduction